

File Code: 1950

Date: February 23, 2018

Dear Planning Participant:

The Ketchikan Misty Fjords Ranger District has released the draft Decision Notice (DN) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Vallenar Young-growth Project Environmental Assessment (EA). The draft DN, FONSI and EA are available on-line at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=51766>. The project record provides important information used in analysis and can be found at: <https://www.cloudvault.usda.gov/index.php/s/T82cnnAjvuvxjk7>. The project record will remain accessible to the public until a final decision for the project is signed. Printed copies of the documents are available at the Ketchikan Misty Fjords Ranger District Office, 3031 Tongass Avenue, Ketchikan, AK 99901.

A Preliminary EA and FONSI were released on December 29, 2017. This draft Decision Notice explains my selection of the Proposed Action analyzed in those documents. The Vallenar Young-growth Project proposes to harvest an estimated 4.6 million board feet (MMBF) of young-growth timber on 155 acres, and recondition 1.2 miles of road in the Vallenar Bay Area of Gravina Island on National Forest System Lands, on the Ketchikan Misty Fjords Ranger District, Tongass National Forest. The draft Decision Notice contains my rationale for this draft decision, includes my findings, and describes the outreach we did to seek input. The project record and information on the project website include comments and concerns we heard from the public and provides a summarized response to those comments.

| This project is subject to the Pre-decisional Administrative Review Process (Objection Process) pursuant to 36 CFR 218, subparts A and B. Objections will only be accepted from those who have previously submitted specific written comments regarding the proposed project during scoping or other designated opportunity for public comment in accordance with 36 CFR 218.5(a). Issues raised in objections must be based on previously submitted timely, specific written comments regarding the proposed project unless based on new information arising after the designated comment opportunities.

Objections, including attachments, must be filed via mail, fax, email, hand-delivery, express delivery, or messenger service (Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., excluding holidays) to:

Earl Stewart, Reviewing Officer
USFS, Tongass National Forest
Federal Building
648 Mission Street
Ketchikan, AK 99901-6591
Fax: (907) 228-6215
Email: objections-alaska-tongass@fs.fed.us

Electronic objections must be submitted in a format such as an email message, .pdf, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx). It is the responsibility of objectors to ensure their objections are received in a timely manner (36 CFR 218.9).

Objections must be submitted within 45 calendar days following the publication of a legal notice in the *Ketchikan Daily News*. The publication date in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an objection. Those wishing to object should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. The regulations prohibit extending the time to file an objection.

At a minimum, an objection must include the following (36 CFR 218.8(d)):

- 1) The objector's name and address, with a telephone number, if available;
- 2) A signature or other verification of authorship upon request (a scanned signature for email may be filed with the objection);
- 3) When multiple names are listed on an objection, identification of the lead objector (verification of the identity of the lead objector shall be provided upon request);
- 4) The name of the proposed project, the name and title of the Responsible Official, and the name(s) of the National Forest(s) and/or Ranger District(s) on which the proposed project will be implemented;
- 5) A description of those aspects of the proposed project addressed by the objection, including specific issues related to the proposed project if applicable, how the objector believes the environmental analysis or draft decision specifically violates law, regulation, or policy; suggested remedies that would resolve the objection; supporting reasons for the reviewing officer to consider; and
- 6) A statement that demonstrates connection between prior specific written comments on the particular proposed project or activity and the content of the objection.

Incorporation of documents by reference is permitted only as provided in 36 CFR 218.8(b). It is the objector's responsibility to ensure timely filing of a written objection with the reviewing officer pursuant to 36 CFR 218.9. All objections are available for public inspection during and after the objection process.

For additional information, please contact: Damien Zona, Team Leader, 907-228-4126, dzona@fs.fed.us, during normal business hours.

Sincerely,

SUSAN A. HOWLE

District Ranger